

The Government will not be accepting any additional questions, comments, or suggestions related to the TIPSS-4 Draft RFP after January 23, 2009. The final TIPSS-4 requirements, including CMMI and EVMS, will be stated in the official RFP.

The following 41 questions related to the TIPSS-4 SB Draft RFP were covered at the Pre-Proposal Conference held on January 12, 2009.

## **SECTION B**

### **QUESTION #1**

Reference B.8

How many total awards will the government make under TIPSS-4 Small Business?

### **RESPONSE #1**

The Government does not have a pre-determined number of awards it will make. The number will be determined based on the outcome of the evaluations.

### **QUESTION #2**

Reference: B All

It is not clear if separate cost proposals are required. Is one cost proposal required for both MBOSS and Cyber Security, or is a separate cost proposal (e.g., separate Volume III binders) required for each task area?

### **RESPONSE #2**

Cost proposals should be contained in one Volume III but should have separated labor costs for both Cybersecurity and MBOSS if the offeror is electing to bid in both task areas.

### **QUESTION #3**

Reference: Section B2 - B7 Pages B-3 - B-22

The draft RFP does not specify the location for services – contractor site or government site. Does the Government intend to provide a revised format for listing both? Should offerors propose all hours at government-site rates?

### **RESPONSE #3**

Labor rates shall be based on the Washington DC Metropolitan Area. In the event that work is performed outside of the DC Metro Area different labor rates will be negotiated at the task order level. When calculating the total CPFF portion of the proposal the offeror shall propose as contractor site and include the appropriate G&A, Overhead, etc. This breakdown should be detailed in Volume III of the proposal in accordance with Section L.13.

### **QUESTION #4**

Reference: Section B.10

Is there a limitation on the indirect rates applied to Travel? Is there a cap at the contract level for total Travel amount per each Fiscal year or is it determined at the Task Order level?

### **RESPONSE #4**

In accordance with Section B.10 of the RFP, offerors may apply indirect rates to travel in accordance with their normal accounting practices. Section B.10 also states: “if applicable, a not –to-exceed travel amount will be identified under a separate CLIN on each task order.”

### **QUESTION #5**

Reference: RFP Section B, Paragraph B.8 Page 23

There is no maximum value for a task order in the small procurement. There was TIPSS industry day briefings that mentioned that there would be a \$3,500,000 limit.

Is this still the case?

### **RESPONSE #5**

Based on current strategy, there will be no dollar threshold specified for task orders issued under the TIPSS-4 SB contract.

## **SECTION C**

### **QUESTION #6**

We were surprised to see the principal scope of the work in MBOSS and CS. Most of the task areas such as EVMS, IV&V, Disaster Recovery COO & Contingency Planning, Quantitative Risk Analysis of Large Sensitive Systems, Computer Security Planning,

Hot-site and Cold-site supports etc. are not small-business friendly. Majority of these tasks are primarily handled by large-business in a real life.

Please clarify.

#### **RESPONSE #6**

The CO will use market research, historical data, look at the size and complexity of the requirement, ensure small business goals are met, and any other determinants in choosing the appropriate vehicle.

#### **QUESTION #7**

Reference: C.6.2 / Page C-7

“hot-site and cold-site support services including hardware and software”

Does this mean, You are expecting a Small Business to setup hot-site and cold-site services? Do they need to acquire Hardware and software for the same? Please explain.

#### **RESPONSE #7**

A “Hot-Site is, in effect, a redundant copy of the primary location, including, but not limited to, facility, personnel, hardware, software, telecomm services, data files, etc.. In the event of a disaster at the primary location, all work is moved to the hot site and processing continues with little or no interruption in service.

A “Cold-Site” is for the most part the exact opposite of the hot site. The affected organization may only have an empty facility. They would then have to acquire hardware, software, telecomm services, move and load data files, hire personnel, etc... This will result in a delay in resumption of operations.

Any business, large or small, should have performed a cost analysis and or risk assessment to determine if that business can afford to run redundant operations or they can withstand any delay in service. We as an agency should not have an expectation one way or the other, but should ensure the business understands the ramifications and act accordingly.

#### **QUESTION #8**

Reference: C.9

Will education and experience be added to the labor category descriptions?

## **RESPONSE #8**

No.

## **QUESTION #9**

Reference: C.6.1 Paragraph(s): 1 Page(s): C-6

The MBOSS Task Area lists 6 types of services to be provided under that Task Area. These same services are also included in the list of services to be provided under the ITS Task Area in the TIPSS-4 ITS Draft RFP.

Question: Is it the government's intent to have services that are common to both the ITS and MBOSS Task Areas? If so, how will the decision be made under which Task Area the services will be performed?

For example, if there is a requirement to provide Project Management support, under which Task Area will the RFP be released and how will the government determine that Task Area?

## **RESPONSE #9**

The CO will use market research, historical data, look at the size and complexity of the requirement, ensure small business goals are met, and any other determinants in choosing the appropriate vehicle.

## **QUESTION #10**

Reference: RFP Section C, Paragraphs 2, 3, & 4, Page C-3.

The Full & Open and the Small Business schedules are being defined for specific and distinct areas of responsibility; however, we were wondering whether Treasury intends this separation to be carried through the life of TIPSS 4, or whether they expect, on certain projects or programs, for there to be cooperative and interdependent Tasks between Full & Open contractors and Small Business contractors. And if so, how would that work; how would it be overseen?

## **RESPONSE #10**

If you mean by schedules, the TIPSS-4 contractor awards. The small business awardees will remain on the TIPSS-4 contract until they reach a 25 million dollar threshold and then they will exit out of the contract. The contractor will be allowed to complete whatever task order they are on once the max has been reached, but will not be eligible to compete for any new work under the TIPSS-4 contract.

## **QUESTION #11**

Reference: RFP Section – C , Paragraph(s) – C.9.1.30, Page(s) – C - 29

Would the government consider adding labor categories that would complement the Business Process Reengineering Specialist with Senior and Junior labor categories? This would enable a broader spectrum of experience and education levels to contribute to this area of work.

### **RESPONSE #11**

Yes

### **QUESTION #12**

In C.6.2, Cybersecurity (CS) Principal Task Area you state that conducting formal Certification and Accreditation (C&A) efforts such as C&A Documentation Preparation and C&A Testing for both legacy and new systems must be done in accordance with all standard security requirements (e.g., DITCAP, NIACAP, NISPOM, DOJ Directives, etc.). You do not list National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Special Publication (SP) 800-37, Guide for the Security Certification and Accreditation of Federal Information Systems yet you list the DOD standard.

Can you confirm that the Certification and Accreditation process used for Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) Systems within the Department of Treasury is in accordance with NIST Standards and Guidelines?

### **RESPONSE #12**

Yes, all C&A processes for SBU systems with Treasury are in accordance to NIST standards and guidelines.

NIST is a non-regulatory federal agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, whose mission is to promote U.S. innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards, and technology in ways that enhance economic security and improve our quality of life. They provide the baseline guidelines and each of the standard security requirements you mentioned in your question have NIST standards incorporated into them. Subsequent organization (FISMA, Treasury, and IRS) can, and generally do, add additional standard security requirements for the Certification and Accreditation process.

### **QUESTION #13**

Reference: Section C, paragraph C.7, page C-7

Even if bidding both areas MBOSS and Cyber Security only three key personnel résumés

are required, correct?

### **RESPONSE #13**

Correct.

### **QUESTION #14**

Why has only a subset of the comprehensive scope of work in *Section C* of the full and open solicitation (TIRNO-09-R-00012) included in *Section C* of the small business set aside solicitation (TIRNO-09-R-00013)? There are many responsible small business concerns that do not specialize in Management/Business Operations Support Services or Cybersecurity but who are capable of responding to other principal task areas listed in *Section C.6* of TIRNO-09-R-00012, such as application development. It appears that such businesses are effectively being denied an opportunity to participate in TIPSS-4 as a prime offeror on a set aside basis.

Please explain how this division of labor addresses the Small Business Act objective of assuring that a fair proportion of the total purchases *in each industry category* are placed with small-business concerns.

### **RESPONSE #14**

The Small Business Act is satisfied two ways: 1) small businesses are welcome to compete under the ITS contract and 2) under the exclusive SB contract.

### **QUESTION #15**

Reference: C-5

The second paragraph refers to “The support in both principal task areas shall cover the spectrum from local microcomputer applications to large scale integrated systems and shall involve a variety of software languages and hardware platforms”

How does this apply to MBOSS or CS?

Again, will IRS revise the RFP to mandate that all ITS work be set-aside if the Government cost estimate is under \$3M per year?

### **RESPONSE #15**

There will be no small business set-aside in the ITS contract.

### **QUESTION #16**

Reference: Section C.9: Task Order Labor Descriptions. With few exceptions, none of the labor categories define the experience or education levels required for the labor category. This will cause each contractor to define the skill level of each category, and creates the potential for manipulating their proposed hourly rates by bidding lower skilled staff as direct labor than may be required.

Will the Government add either minimum education or minimum experience requirements to each of the labor categories?

**RESPONSE #16**

No.

**QUESTION #17**

Reference: RFP Section \_C.3\_, Paragraph(s) \_\_\_\_, Page(s) \_C-4\_\_.

“TIPSS-4 SB consists of two (2) principal task areas: Management/Business Operations Support Services (MBOSS), Cybersecurity (CS)”.

We understand that the two task areas of TIPSS-4 SB do not involve software development. Please confirm.

**RESPONSE #17**

That is correct.

**QUESTION #18**

Reference: Section C, Paragraph C.1, Page C-3

The draft RFP indicates that 6 small businesses and 15 large businesses were selected under TIPSS-3.

(a) Given that at least four selections will be designated for HUBZone and Service Disabled Vet Owned Small Businesses how many additional selections under this IDIQ does the government anticipate making?

(b) Should we take TIPSS-3 as a guideline and estimate that there will be at least two other additional awards to basic small businesses (ones that do not fit into the HUBZone or SDVOSB categories)?

**RESPONSE #18**

(a) Not known at this time

(b) Unlike the TIPSS-3 contract the TIPSS-4 SB contract is a total small business set-aside contract.

### **QUESTION #19**

Reference: Section C, Paragraph C.6.1, Page C-6

The draft RFP specifically calls for Customer Relationship Management support as part of the MBOSS Task Area, however, there does not seem to be a Labor Category designed to support this sub-task area.

Does the government see any of the current labor categories as relevant for this work? If not, does the government plan to add an additional Task Area Labor Category?

### **RESPONSE #19**

This request will be considered.

### **QUESTION #20**

Reference: Section C, Paragraph C.5.1, Page C-5

SOW paragraph C.5.1 Regional Pricing, if the contractor doesn't have an office in the projected region, it cannot have approved DCAA rates.

Is it feasible to use prevailing rates for that region in lieu of approved DCAA rates?

### **RESPONSE #20**

a) Offerors shall assume that the work will be performed in the Washington, DC Metro Area; b) In the event work is performed outside of this area, the Government will negotiate labor rates for different geographical regions at the task order level.

### **QUESTION #21**

Reference: Section C:

Do we need to submit two separate proposals for each of the Small Business set aside tracks?

### **RESPONSE #21**

If by tracks you mean task areas, then the answer is yes. If an offeror is interested in receiving an award in both tasks areas they must propose as such. TIPSS-4 SB contract awards will be made by task area.

## **SECTION G**

### **QUESTION #22**

Reference: G.8

Providing supporting documentation (receipts for approved contractor employee travel/ODCs and time sheets) increases the level business administration necessary to provide monthly invoices.

If a company maintains a billing system deemed acceptable by DCAA audit, may the requirement to provide such additional supporting documentation be removed?

### **RESPONSE #22**

Contractors will be required to adhere to section G.8 of the RFP.

### **QUESTION #23**

Reference: Section G, paragraph G.8.2, pages G-8 to G-10

I do not see any mention of billing our General and Administrative (G&A) rate. Our indirect elements are fringe, overhead and G&A. Where do you want that included on the invoice?

### **RESPONSE #23**

G&A should be included in accordance with the requirement cited in Section G.8.2 (g) of the RFP.

### **QUESTION #24**

Reference: G.2, paragraph 3, p. G-2:

For the Contracting Officer, please verify if address should include "Suite 500" as indicated on DRFP cover (i.e. the SF 33).

### **RESPONSE #24:**

The address is correct. Suite "500" is the address expressly for the receipt of proposals.

## **SECTION H**

## **QUESTION #25**

Reference: H-4

If a small business exceeds the size standard and becomes CMMI Level 2, can it be moved to the ITS contract instead of being eliminated from the TIPSS-4 Program since the task areas under MBOSS and CS are included in ITS? This would help small businesses to grow and not discourage them from bidding work that would put them over the size limit.

## **RESPONSE #25**

TIPSS-4 ITS and TIPSS-4 SB are two separate contracts. There is no mechanism to add offerors from one contract to the other. If a small business graduated the TIPSS-4 SB contract limitations and wanted to work under the TIPSS-4 ITS contract they would have to bid on the solicitation during the rolling admissions period for TIPSS-4 ITS.

## **QUESTION #26**

Reference: H-4

This section states “No new work will be allowed and at the end of the period of performance of current task orders, the business will no longer be affiliated with the TIPSS-4 contract.”

Will the IRS be able to exercise all options in the original contract after the size limit is reached or will the task be terminated at the end of the current contract period (base year, option year 1, etc.)?

How will the client be assured of continuity in support of Mission critical work?

## **RESPONSE #26**

If a small business under the TIPSS-4 SB contract graduated but still had active task orders, the Government would exercise the base contract option to allow the small business to complete their current task orders. They would be ineligible to compete on any new work. After all task orders were completed the Government would not exercise any further options on the base contract.

## **QUESTION #27**

Reference: Section H.2 Conversion to a Performance-Based Acquisition, Page H-3. The Government states “At the Task Order level, if the Government and the contractor agree, a task order can be converted to a performance-based order after the initial period of performance.”

What constitutes the conversion of a Task Order to a performance-based order?

### **RESPONSE #27**

As discussed in Section H.2 the contracting officer and contractor will agree to the ability to convert a statement of work to a performance work statement.

Vendors are encouraged to visit the Seven Step Performance Base Website for further clarification of what constitute an performance based task order.

[http://acquisition.gov/comp/seven\\_steps/home.html](http://acquisition.gov/comp/seven_steps/home.html)

- Describe the work in terms of the required results rather than either "how" the work is to be accomplished or the number of hours to be provided.
- Enable assessment of work performance against measurable performance standards.
- Rely on the use of measurable performance standards and financial incentives in a competitive environment to encourage competitors to develop and institute innovative and cost-effective methods of performing the work.

### **QUESTION #28**

Reference: Section H.16 requires a contractor to notify the Contracting Officer if there is any change in the status of its approved Purchasing System.

(a) Is having an approved Purchasing System a condition of receiving a TIPSS IV prime contract?

(b) If yes, and a contractor has not undergone a Purchasing System review at the request of a Government agency (typically performed by DCAA), will the Government accept the opinion of an outside independent firm that the contractors Purchasing System meets the standards establish by DCAA?

### **RESPONSE #28**

a) No an approved purchasing system is not a condition of receiving a TIPSS-4 Prime Contract Award. However, in accordance with Section M.5 of the RFP, Government personnel will make a determination of responsibility. The factors listed in Section M.5. (including Purchasing and Subcontracting) may be investigated and considered in the evaluation process. The evaluation of responsibility will be in accordance with FAR Part 9, offerors that are not deemed responsible will not be considered for award.

## **SECTION J**

### **QUESTION #29**

- (a) Is there a small business set-aside for the ITS work under TIPSS-4?
- (b) Does the IRS intend to make one or more ITS awards to small business?
- (c) Can the same small business receive an award under ITS and MBOSS?

### **RESPONSE #29**

- (a) No
- (b) Awards will be won in the ITS contract solely on the strength of proposals.
- (c) Yes, if they are qualified.

## **Section L**

### **QUESTIONS #30**

Reference: Section L L.8.2 Instructions for Proposal Submission – page L7-Binder 2: Management Approach

Question: If you are bidding for MBOSS and Cyber Security tasks how many Key Personnel Résumés are required? Three for each principal task area?

### **RESPONSE #30**

Offerors who elect to bid on both task areas will only have to submit one set of key personnel. These key personnel will be responsible for managing task orders in either task area for the offeror.

### **QUESTIONS #31**

Reference: RFP Section L, Paragraph L.8.1, Page L-5

Will the government accept team members' past performance?

### **RESPONSE #31**

No, past performance shall be from the prime offeror only.

### **QUESTIONS #32**

Reference: Section L, paragraph L.12, page L- 19, third bullet – How do you determine

the number of additional direct labor personnel required and their rates when we do not even know what task orders we will be bidding on and what the labor requirements will be for each task order?

### **RESPONSE #32**

This refers to offerors that don't have adequate staff on board to fill labor categories specified in Section B. An offeror may propose a labor category rate for a person that will be "newly hired." Sometimes offerors are not fully staffed prior to contract award and have to hire contingent employees to fill all the positions specified in Section B. For example, the basis of a proposed "new hire" rate could be a labor rate negotiated with a potential employee (i.e. new hire agreement letter).

### **QUESTION #33**

Reference: Section L.11.2.1 indicates that offerors shall submit three project profiles for each principal task area they elect to propose under.

Since the diversity of services included in the solicitation encourages the formation of teams, may offerors include project profiles from subcontractors in order to demonstrate the full experience of the proposed team?

### **RESPONSE #33**

All references must be from the prime offeror on this solicitation and may reflect that offeror's experience as either a prime or subcontractor on previous contracts/task orders

### **QUESTION #34**

Reference: L-5

L.8 states the RFP "requires that all Offerors submit references for the Past Performance evaluation prior to the formal proposal submission" L.8.1 states Offerors "may" submit early.

Is it required to submit the Past Performance evaluation early?

### **RESPONSE #34**

All offerors **must** submit seven past performance references. Offerors **may** submit the references up to ten business days prior to the proposal due date. This is not mandatory, but a request for early submission. There will only be one official proposal due date. Team member/subcontractor experience may be used as a reference if it reflects the experience of the prime offeror on this solicitation. Individual task orders may be used as references.

### **QUESTION #35**

Reference: Section L.8.3 Format, Organization, and Contents of Files

Can the Government explain the usage of “box of boxes” relative to volume numbers and volume labeling? Does “box” refer to delivery box? One can envision multiple boxes for shipping, and thus the exterior boxes would be labeled 1 of  $x$ , 2 of  $x$ , and so on. How does this relate to volume number and volume labeling? Are there instructions with regard to contents of each box? Does the Government anticipate retaining the shipping boxes?

### **RESPONSE #35**

“Box” does refer to the delivery box. The purpose of labeling the boxes as described in Section L.9.3 is to ensure that the entire proposal has been inventoried and there is not a box missing. The labels on the shipping box do not need to indicate which Volume is contained inside of each box. The Government does not anticipate retaining the shipping boxes.

### **QUESTION #36**

Reference: Section L.8.1 – Clarification on 7 Past Performance References

If the Govt. intends to check a total of 4 references, what is the rationale for requesting 7 past performances Questionnaire to be completed?

### **RESPONSE #36**

This is to ensure the Government can contact at least four references if certain references provided are unavailable.

### **QUESTION #37**

Are the questionnaires provided to the seven (7) past performance references required by section L.8.1 or of just the three (3) references that are included in the project profiles of section L.11.2.1?

### **RESPONSE #37**

The Government will attempt to contact a minimum of four references and reserves the right to contact all references.

### **QUESTION #38**

Reference: RFP Section L, Paragraph L12.1, Page 19

Can teammates be added after award?

**RESPONSE #38**

Yes.

**SECTION M**

**QUESTION #39**

In Section M you mention "The IRS intends to award at least two contracts to Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs) and two contracts to HUBZone businesses."

How many contracts does the IRS plan to award Small Businesses?

**RESPONSE #39**

The Government will not have a pre-determined number of awards it will make. The number will be determined based on the outcome of the evaluation.

**QUESTION #40**

Section M, paragraph M.5, page M-9

How soon will a contractor be notified that you want to do a Pre-Award survey and how long will the contractor have to prepare for the evaluation?

**RESPONSE #40**

The Government may conduct a Pre-Award Survey in accordance with FAR PART 9. If it is determined by the Contracting Officer that a Pre-Award Survey is needed the offeror will have sufficient time to respond.

**QUESTION #41**

Reference: Section M.2 - Basis For Award. "Offerors are **not permitted** to bid under more than one competition within MBOSS or Cybersecurity."

(a) Please clarify whether offerors may propose as a Prime within the MBOSS Small Business competition as well as a subcontractor within the MBOSS SDVOSB and/or Hubzone competitions.

(c) Please describe the Government's process for determining which task order competitions occur within the MBOSS Principal Task Area versus the ITS Principal Task Area.

**RESPONSE #41**

- (a) Offerors may propose as a PRIME and a sub-contractor if they wish, as the Government enters into agreement with PRIME contractors only.
- (c) The Government reserves the right to make a determination as to Task Area based on the intricacies of each requirement. The Contracting Officer has discretion to make those decisions at the task order level.